

Bluepalm: Body + Emotion = Higher Cognition

USC Lecture

In March 2010 Jackie Planeix and Tom Crocker lectured to 105 undergrad students in the USC Department of Neuroscience on "Movement and Learning." They chronicled their artistic journey,



shared hands-on examples of kinesthetic learning, and collected data to measure its relevance to students. Students closed their laptops, rose from their seats, and

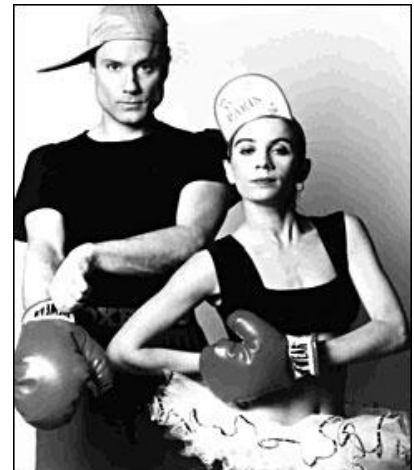
filled the amphitheater aisles. Initial skepticism evaporated as the group transformed itself into an active learning community—bending, shaping, and shaking their bodies, fielding inquiries with movement-based responses, and sharing their reflections: 100% of participants found value in a multi-sensory learning environment.

USC Neuroscience Professor Larry Swanson had this to say: "Having seen your presentation, I am convinced that a true interaction between the methods used to learn the arts and those used to learn the humanities and sciences is the most effective way to teach in general." Professor Michel Baudry said: "You showed brilliantly how learning and creativity can benefit from an integrated approach where physical movements, emotions, art, and imagination are combined to transmit information and communication."

What led two former Béjart dancers to lecture to a USC Neurobiology class entitled "Brain, Mind and Machines?" Jackie and Tom are co-founder/directors of Bluepalm, which has eschewed institutionalization to, instead, fluidly give form to

their evolving artistic and educational concerns. Graduates of Maurice Béjart's interdisciplinary performing arts school, Mudra, Jackie and Tom toured the world with Mr.

Béjart's powerful 70 member troupe—from South American opera houses to the Persian desert, Florentine gardens to Broadway, 200 performances a year, marking Jackie and Tom with the highest standards of artistic excellence.



Bluepalm is Born

It was in Geneva that [Bluepalm](#) was born. In 1985, Jackie and Tom laid the foundation for their life's work with the creation of the company's signature piece, 'DANCE TALKS!' The work explores what it feels like to be a dancer—pain, bliss, poverty, ecstasy; sinewy bodies putting into words the sensual intelligence unique to dance and dancers. 'DANCE TALKS!' played the Pompidou Center in Paris before

touring the U.S. In 1995, the creation of 'Fractured Fairy Tales' marked the beginning of



Bluepalm's commitment to arts-based learning in schools. Bluepalm worked as roster artists with the Orange County Performing Arts Center (2001-2004) and the Music Center (1998-2003); in 2003, they led the Music Center Summer Institute (Advanced

Level) professional development. As California Arts Council Touring Directory artists (1999-2004), Bluepalm performed and taught in underserved communities throughout California. At every memorable venue, valiant local Arts Council representatives greeted, fed, and engaged with the artists.

Arts in Schools

In the 90s it became increasingly clear that keeping the arts alive in society meant dramatically expanding their presence in schools. In 1999 Los



Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) began its Arts Community Partnership Network (ACPN), to bring community arts organizations into schools as part

of a shared-delivery model (classroom teachers, arts specialists, and community arts providers). Honed by performance experiences on stages like the Bolshoi, Jackie and Tom's techniques were now helping maximize student academic performance in cafeteriums in Watts and throughout the district. Bluepalm grew to a team of ten highly trained artist/educators, delivering standards-based, sequential programming to over 100,000 LAUSD students and professional development for teachers, helping them to 'think like an artist' across the curriculum.

In December 2008, LAUSD suspended contracts with all community arts providers. The California Arts Council's 'Artists in Schools' program picked up some of the slack to ensure that students continue to receive the arts. Bluepalm was instrumental in the creation of a consortium to leverage the voice of community providers. Serving on the County Arts Commission's Roundtable Advisory Board, Bluepalm helps shape discussion on issues facing the arts: 1) defining its role in the Creative Economy, 2) the need to expand arts-based learning as a tool for social change, 3) ensuring that community providers are active participants in the design of local and state arts plans, 4) including arts training in graduate education programs; if teachers

are unprepared, California children will not receive the sequential, in-depth experiences they need to successfully navigate the creative workforce.

Arts Lead the Way

Bluepalm's contribution has been a sustained reflection upon what learning through the body and emotion can teach the field of education. Jackie and Tom were invited to USC because scientists now recognize that, sometimes, the arts lead the way.

Bluepalm: Art Culture Education (ACE) receives funding from the California Arts Council's [Artists in Schools Program](#), which supports residencies in schools, and is managed by Wayne Cook Wcook@cac.ca.gov.

